

Psalm 101

A Psalm of David.

Psalm 101: This psalm describes the perfect king. It expresses David's own aims but, at the same time, is a picture of Christ, his descendant, who will in fact fulfill this ideal picture. The ideal king sings to the Lord (verse 1), keeps his personal life pure (verses 2-4), and administers social justice (verses 5-8).

Verses 1-8: This Davidic psalm expresses the righteous commitments of the mediatorial king (David), to his eternal king (the Lord), in regard to:

- (1) His own personal life and;
- (2) The lives of those who inhabit the kingdom.

Possible, this psalm was used later at the coronations of future kings over Israel. Ultimately, only King Jesus would perfectly fulfill these holy resolutions (compare 9:6-7; 11:1-5).

- I. Personal Life of the King (101:1-4).
- II. Personal Outcome of Kingdom Inhabitants (101:5-8).
 - A. The Just (101:6);
 - B. The Unjust (101:5, 7-8).

Verses 1-8: In this psalm, we have David declaring how he intended to regulate his household, and to govern his kingdom, that he might stop wickedness, and encourage godliness. It is also applicable to private families, and is the householder's psalm. It teaches all that have any power, whether more or less, to use it so as to be a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well. The chosen subject of the psalm is God's mercy and judgment. The Lord's providences concerning his people are commonly mixed; mercy and judgment. God has set the one over against the other, both to do good, like showers and sunshine. When, in his providence, he exercises us with the mixture of mercy and judgment, we must make suitable acknowledgments to him for both. Family mercies and family afflictions are both calls to family religion. Those who are in public stations are not thereby excused from care in governing their families; they are the more concerned to set a good example of ruling their own houses well. Whenever a man has a house of his own, let him seek to have God to dwell with him; and those may expect his presence, who walk with a perfect heart, in a perfect way. David resolves to practice no evil himself. He further resolves not to keep bad servants, nor to employ those about him that are wicked. He will not admit them into his family, lest they spread the infection of sin. A froward heart, one that delights to be cross and perverse, is not fit for society, the bond of which is Christian love. Nor will he countenance slanderers, those who take pleasure in wounding their neighbor's reputation. Also, God resists the proud, and false, deceitful people, who scruple not to tell lies, or commit frauds. Let everyone be zealous and diligent to reform his own heart and ways, and to do this early; ever mindful of that future, most awful morning, when the King of righteousness shall cut off all wicked doers from the heavenly Jerusalem.

Psalm 101:1 "I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O LORD, will I sing."

Either of mercy and justice, exercised by him towards his people, which he resolved to do, and did (2 Sam. 8:15). Which are two very principal points in government, are the glory of a reign, the support of the throne, and the happiness of a people (Prov. 20:28). Or rather of the mercy of God to himself, in delivering him from his enemies, and raising him to the throne. And of the judgment of God in maintaining his cause, and avenging him on those that hated him. Every good man has reason to sing of the "mercy" of God. Not only of his providential mercy, but of his special mercy, prepared in council and covenant for him, displayed in regeneration, in the pardon of sin, and in his everlasting salvation. Or of "grace" and goodness, as the word signifies. Of the grace and goodness of God laid up in Christ, shown forth through him, and to which the whole of salvation is owing.

Singing of this shows a sense of it, thankfulness for it, and a cheerful disposition of soul, in a view of interest in it. And he may also sing of "judgment": of righteous punishment inflicted upon his enemies, and the enemies of God, and Christ, and true religion. Not as taking delight in the misery of fellow creatures, but as rejoicing in the glory of divine justice displayed therein, and in a deliverance from them. As Israel did at the Red sea; and as the church will, when Babylon is destroyed. Moreover, a good man may sing of mercy and judgment together, with respect to himself. There being, in the course of his life, a mixture of prosperity and adversity, of merciful and afflictive dispensations, which work together for his good.

And he has reason to be thankful for the one as for the other, as Job was (Job 1:21). Judgment sometimes signifies chastisement (Jer. 10:24). It may be understood of Christ, who sung of the mercy of God, as shown in the mission of him into the world to save men, and which was glorified in their redemption by him. And of the justice of God exercised on him, as their surety, on whom judgment came unto condemnation for their sins. And when the sword of justice was awaked against him, the hand of mercy was turned on the little ones (Zech. 13:7).

"Unto thee, O Lord, will I sing": On the above subjects.

We see a Psalm now from David as he takes the office of king. David is aware that he is king, because God anointed him to be king and not from his own worthiness. In the last few Psalms that David wrote, he was praying for God's help, and then praising Him for the help that came. God is not only a God of love, but a God of judgement as well. David is aware that the blessings from God come when we let God be Lord of all. To stay in the blessings, David, the same as believers today, must stay in the will of God. The songs that David sings are for the ears of God. Jesus taught, that to pray in secret just for God's ears, brought great pleasure to God. We will find that praise given in private just to God, brings Him much pleasure as well. David could easily have been alone singing to God here.

Psalm 101:2 "I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart."

"Perfect way": As the king goes, so go his followers (compare verse 6).

"When wilt thou come unto me"? This is not an eschatological expectation, but rather a personal expression of David's need for God's immanent involvement in his earthly kingship.

“My house”: The king first starts with his own personal life (compare verse 7), and then looks beyond to his kingdom (compare verses 5, 8).

This is a determination on David's part to walk uprightly before God. David says here, God I will walk uprightly, when no one knows about it but You and me. I will not walk uprightly, so that men can look and say David is walking uprightly. But because I want to do God's will in my everyday life. David is asking God to come and fellowship with him in his home. I am sure David wants to confer with the Lord before he makes the weightier decisions while he is king. We know that David's heart wanted to please God in all things. We do also know that David sinned, because he answered the call of his flesh. David never stopped desiring to do God's will in his heart though. I love the promise David made to God, that he would walk uprightly before God in his home. So many people in our day, are pretty nice people when they are out in public, but live terrible lives at home with their families. We should not be two people. We should be the same in public and at home. Our Christianity is not real, unless it is active at home as well as in public.

Verses 3-4: Similar to the “blessed man” (in Psalm. 1:1).

Psalm 101:3 "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; [it] shall not cleave to me."

Either the eyes of the body, which are the inlets of lust and are easily caught with objects that inflame the heart, and should be turned aside from beholding vanity. Or the eyes of the mind; so the Targum, "I will not propose to my heart;" or, as Kimchi, "in my thought". That is, I will not set up an evil thing in my imagination, to dwell upon in my thoughts, and take delight and pleasure in meditating upon it. Or set it before me, to imitate as a pattern, to work by, and copy after. Christ did not so; he set the Lord always before him (Psalm 16:8). Not anything of Belial or Satan, as the phrase here may be rendered. No, he always bid Satan, or anything of his, be gone, and get behind him (Matt. 4:10). “Mine eyes”: The king desires to look at nothing but that which is righteous (compare verse 6).

"I hate the work of them that turn aside": From God, and from His law. From the paths of religion, truth, and virtue. And from the Gospel, and a profession of it; such are not fit for the kingdom of God, and in these God and Christ have no pleasure (Heb. 10:38).

"It shall not cleave to me": Neither the wicked thing, or thing of Belial. Nor the work of apostasy; that is, he would have no familiarity nor fellowship with it. Not come near it, nor connive at it, but hate and abhor it. The Jews said, an evil disease, or a thing of Belial, "cleaveth fast unto him" (Psalm 41:8), but they were mistaken.

Do not fellowship with the wicked of this world. Turn those X-rated, R-rated, or P.G. movies off. They plant evil thoughts in your mind. I have heard so many people say, O that won't hurt me, I just want to see what it is all about. Your mind is a computer. Everything you see and hear goes into that computer and is recorded there. You may not realize that it is influencing you to do bad, but it is. This is just what David is saying here. He will not even look at wicked, if by chance it might influence his thinking. The best way to stay out of trouble is not to go where trouble is.

Most people take their first drink, because they are trying to be one of the gang they are with. The people and the things we are around, influence us, whether we want them to or not. David should have done what he said he would do here. The first step to sin is to look with your eyes. In this David is saying, I hate sin, I will not get involved in sin. Just as Eve's sin began when she looked at the forbidden fruit with desire in her heart, David's sin began when he looked at Bathsheba. Sin begins with the eye looking, and the heart desiring the forbidden.

Psalm 101:4 "A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked [person]."

A man of a froward heart, that devises froward things in his heart, and speaks it out with his mouth. That which is perverse, and contrary to the law of God and Gospel of Christ, to the light of nature and the word of God. Contrary to the sentiments of all good men, and repugnant to truth and good manners. Such sort of persons are disagreeable companions, and good men would not choose to have anything to do with them. They are hateful to Christ, and shall be bid to depart from him (see Prov. 8:13).

"I will not know a wicked person": So as to be familiar with him, or show him any respect. Have any affection for him, or take any notice of him. Such Christ will not know at the great day (Matt. 7:23). Or "I will not know wickedness", or any wicked work and action, approve of it, love it, delight in it, and do it. The Targum interprets it of the evil concupiscence, corruption of nature, or indwelling sin, which is hated by the believer (Rom. 7:15). And is utterly unknown to Christ. He was not conscious of it; he knew no sin (2 Cor. 5:21). Original or actual; he had no sin in him, nor was any done by him, or, it may be, mention is made of the morning. Because that was the usual time of hearing and judging causes (Jer. 21:12). Or this may have respect to the spiritual reign of Christ, whose coming will be as the morning; when the Heathens shall perish out of his land, when sinners shall be consumed out of the earth, and the wicked shall be no more. And he will destroy them that destroy the earth (Psalm 10:16). The Targum agrees with this, "in the world to come, which is like to the light of the morning, I will destroy all the wicked of the earth:" that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord. From the city of Jerusalem, as the Targum and Kimchi interpret it. And it may be understood of the church of God, in the spiritual reign of Christ, into which shall enter no more the uncircumcised and the unclean. And all that offend and do iniquity shall be gathered out of it (Isa. 52:1). Or of the New Jerusalem church state, in the personal reign of Christ, into which no wicked doers will be admitted, but will remain for ever without (Rev. 21:27). "Wicked": The king will not engage in wickedness (compare verse 8).

Again here, David determines not to have evil people in his company. We become like the people we are around. We must be very careful in choosing our friends. David is saying, he will not employ evil people to work for him, or have evil people for his friends. Notice that David begins by cleaning up his own heart. Then he refuses to be associated with any evil people who might influence him to do evil. Children, that is why your parents caution you to choose your friends carefully.

Psalm 101:5 "Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I cut off: him that hath a high look and a proud heart will not I suffer."

“Slandereth ... high look ... proud heart”: Neither character assassination nor pride will be tolerated in the kingdom.

David is trying to pattern his life according to the life of his Lord. Even though a person says something ugly about someone in private, God does not approve of slander, and neither does David. David says, if I hear someone talking this way, I will know the man is evil and get rid of him. David is also following God's choice, when he says that those with a proud heart and a high look will be cut off as well. David is choosing his companions by God's choices. If God does not approve of them, neither will David.

Psalm 101:6 "Mine eyes [shall be] upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me."

To look them out, bring them to court, and promote them to places of honor and trust. Such a one was David himself, and such there were in the land of Israel, though but few, and of which he complains (Psalm 12:1). Christ's eyes are upon faithful persons, on faithful ministers of the word, who preach the Gospel faithfully, administer the ordinances truly, are faithful to the souls of men in watching over them, reproving and exhorting them. His eyes are upon them to keep and preserve them, and to honor and reward them with a crown of life that fadeth not away. And his eyes are also on faithful members of churches, such who truly believe in him, who hold fast the faithful word, and keep close to his worship and ordinances. His eyes are upon them, to show favor to them, to bestow blessings upon them, and to protect and defend them, and preserve them from perishing. “Faithful of the land”: Compare to “the wicked of the land” (in verse 8).

"That they may dwell with me": Or, "sit with me"; at his table, or at the council board, or in judgment, and assist him in the affairs of government. So such as are faithful shall dwell with Christ both here and hereafter. They dwell in him and with him by faith, and have communion with him. They dwell in his house below, and shall dwell with him above for evermore.

"He that walketh in a perfect way": In God's way, in the way he has prescribed and directed, to what is perfect. In a way agreeable to his word, in all his commandments and ordinances, in Christ, the way, the truth, and the life. "And in the way of perfect men, as it may be rendered. In the way that such walk; and though he does not walk perfectly, or without sin, yet sincerely and uprightly.

"He shall serve me": Be taken into my service. Be employed by me, as a prime minister, a counsellor, a secretary of state, or in other lesser places under David. But, as it refers to Christ, it signifies that such a one shall be a servant of his, which is no small honor. For, where he is, there shall his servant be (John 12:26). The Targum is, "he shall stand with my servants;" in his house here, and at his right hand hereafter.

David wants people around him who love the Lord as he does. He knows that people who love God have good morals. They will be loyal to David as they have been loyal to their God. David expects no more from his servants than he is willing to be himself. When godly people are in authority, they choose godly people to work with them. You will have a government that is fair and honest when this is the case.

Psalm 101:7 "He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight."

He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house. Flatterers, sycophants, tricking and fraudulent persons, who seek to supplant others, and get into their places; these should lose the favor they had, when detected. So hypocritical persons, that have only a form of godliness, a mask of religion, and false teachers that lie in wait to deceive; and antichrist, whose coming was with all deceivableness of unrighteousness; who has seduced men by his miracles, doctrines, and sorceries; these shall have no place, neither in Christ's house below nor above. The Targum is, "he that works deceit shall not dwell in the midst of the house of my sanctuary:"

"He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight": Or, "he shall not be established" before mine eyes. He shall not continue in his post and place, in his office and station. He shall soon be dismissed from it. Lying is very abominable to God, very prejudicial to men, and hated by Christ, who is truth itself. All sorts of lies, and liars are so, religious and doctrinal ones. Such who speak lies in hypocrisy, as the emissaries of Rome; all that make an abomination, or a lie, will have no place with Christ in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:27). "Deceit ... lies": A premium is put on truth as foundational for a kingdom associated with the God of truth (compare John 14:6).

A truthful man, such as David, cannot tolerate people around him who are not truthful. Some cultures think it to be clever to be deceitful, if it gets them where they are going. A few years ago we worked with an Indian tribe here in the United States. I will not tell which one. Their belief was that it was not evil to steal to help your family, but it was evil to get caught. You see, not everyone goes by the Ten Commandments. Atheist do not have a guilty conscience when they steal or lie, since they do not believe in God. We see David, in the Scripture above, as a godly man. He is saying, if you are working for me and I find out you are committing these sins, I will fire you and run you as far away from his view as possible. He not only removes them from his house, but from seeing them in the distance as well.

Psalm 101:8 "I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD."

"The land ... the city of the LORD": Israel and Jerusalem respectively.

David hints at the grand design of his kingdom by mentioning "the city of the Lord". The psalmist's goal is to reveal the king's loyalty to God. It could well have been used at the king's coronation and at appropriate festivals thereafter.

David is well aware that one rotten apple can ruin the whole barrel. At the very beginning of his reign as king, David will seek out the evil people and prosecute them, and get them away from society. It even appears, that the ones who had not done anything worthy of death, were sent away from the city. In our society today, it would be like deporting them, or locking them away from society. David is determined to have the land that he reigns over, a land of godly people. Jerusalem, was thought of by David as being a holy city, and he would not tolerate evil in the city of God. Even today, it is still thought of as being the holy city of God. To be the king of the land carried tremendous responsibility with it. David wanted his reign to be a godly reign. Many

of the politicians today could take a lesson from David here. God is watching to see how they administer the job they have been given.

Psalm 101 Questions

1. In verse 1, David will sing of what?
2. Who is he singing to?
3. What occasion prompted David to write this Psalm?
4. God is not just a God of love, but of _____.
5. When did the blessings of God come to David?
6. In verse 2, David says, he will behave himself _____.
7. What is David saying, when he says, I will walk within my house with a perfect heart?
8. Who will David confer with about the weightier decisions he must make in office?
9. Our Christianity is not _____, unless it is the same at home as it is in public.
10. I will set no wicked thing before my _____.
11. Should a Christian watch X-rated movies?
12. What does the author call the human mind?
13. What is recorded in your mind?
14. How is the best way to stay out of trouble?
15. How do most people get started drinking?
16. When did Eve's sin begin?
17. When did David's sin with Bathsheba begin?
18. What is verse 4 of this lesson saying?
19. How does David begin cleaning up those around him?
20. How was the slander described in verse 5?
21. What are some of the characteristics of men that God does not like?

22. Who does David want to dwell with him?
23. People who love God have _____ .
24. Why can you not trust an atheist to tell the truth?
25. If David finds any one of his staff doing evil, and lying, what will he do with them?
26. What will David do to the wicked in the land, at the beginning of his reign?
27. Why does he run them out of the city?
28. What is thought by David to be the holy city of God?